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AFTER ACTION REPORT

19TH ARMD INF. BATTALION

14TH ARMORED DIVISION

JAN 45 thru APR 45

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HEADQUARTERS
19TH ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION
APO 446 U. S. ARMY

26 January 1945.

SUBJECT: Battalion History.

TO : Commanding General, 14th Arm'd Div., APO 446, c/o PM, U.S. Army. (Att: A.C. of S, G-3).

In the withdrawal from Hatten, France on 21 January 1945, the command half-track of this organization was destroyed after receiving shrapnel hits that rendered the vehicle immobile, and all records and history of operations which were carried in the vehicle were destroyed.

Guy A. Federzoni

GUY A. FEDERZONI
Capt. 19th Arm'd Inf. Bn.
S-3

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HEADQUARTERS
19TH ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION
APO 446 U. S. ARMY

BATTALION HISTORY

010001 Jan 45 to 312400
Jan 45

The Battalion was alerted at 0355 1 January by telephone call from Colonel Hill, c/s who directed that (1) the battalion, consisting of companies A,B,C, Headquarters and Service, Medical Detachment with Company "A", 25th Tank Battalion attached was attached to Task Force Hudelson which was engaged with the enemy (who had launched a determined attack) in the Foret De Neiderbronn generally north of Phillipsburg, France. (2) That Major F. T. Green, Battalion C.O. report as soon as possible to Colonel D. H. Hudelson at his C.P. located in Barenthal, France.

Major Green left the Battalion C.P. at Reidheim, France, at 0530 hours for Barenthal, France, and the rest of the Battalion under the command of Captain J. E. Donahey, Executive Officer marched to Barenthal, France in the following manner - (1) Reconnaissance Platoon moved out and posted road guides along the route Reidheim, Bouxwiller, Ingwiller, Zinswiller, Barenthal; (2) At 0600 Companies "B" and "C" left Lmbsheim for Barenthal. (3) At 0620 Headquarters Company, Medical Detachment, A-25th Tank Battalion and Battalion Maintenance Section moved out for Barenthal in one column. (4) A Company, 19th Armored Infantry Battalion which had been relieved from its attachment to 25th Tank Battalion moved to Barenthal from its bivouac area in vicinity of Neuwiller, France at Q7524.

At T. F. Hudelson C.P. in Barenthal, Major Green received an order making the following distribution of troops: (1) Company "A", 19th Armored Infantry Battalion, 3rd Platoon "B" Company, 19th Armored Infantry Battalion and Company "A", 25th Tank Battalion (less one platoon) were attached to T. F. Hudelson at Barenthal: (2) The rest of the Battalion (Companies "B", less 3rd Platoon, "C", less 1st Platoon, Headquarters, Service, one platoon "A"-25th, and 19th Medical Detachment) were attached to 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron commanded by Lt. Col. Hodges, at Mouterhouse, France. Major Green reported to the C.P. 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron at Mouterhouse after leaving necessary instructions to carry out the dispositions of troops as indicated by Col. Hudelson's order.

The weather was cold, snow and ice covered the roads and ground making the half tracks and tanks hard to control, but the columns of vehicles were brought in to their respective march objectives in good order, and by 1000 hours companies "C" and "B" were dismounted and in an assembly area at 785453, Company "C" (-) had its vehicles dispersed in that vicinity, "B" Company's vehicles were in vicinity 782434: The Assault Gun platoon was in position at 784434: The 81 MM Mortar Platoon was in position at 786454: The machine gun platoon was attached to "C" Company. The rest of Headquarters Company less five Reconnaissance Platoon ¼ ton trucks and their crews were in Mouterhouse.

The situation prevailing in the sector into which the Battalion moved was confused and fluid, with elements of Engineers, Tank Battalions, Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadrons, and Tank Destroyers disposed along the high ground

and net work of roads and trails in vicinity Q795462.

The mission of the Battalion was to attack to the north and restore the original line held by friendly forces. Our own reconnaissance and questioning of troops in the area indicated that the situation on our right flank was vague, and apparently that flank was uncovered. Companies "B" and "C" had moved to an assembly area prepared to launch an attack when Major Green received an order from Lt. Col. Hodge to hold up the attack until further orders. Major Green drove back to Mouterhouse to determine the situation, while he was gone a German attack was launched against our right flank about 350 yards from the spot selected as our Battalion C.P., and a heavy fire fight with small arms, mortars, and artillery took place. This fire fight was still raging when Major Green returned and ordered a withdrawal.

"B" and "C" companies were withdrawn from their assembly areas, all other units were ordered out while "C" company set up a defensive line astride, the one road out. As the last unit cleared "C" company withdrew to line established by "B" company. All units withdrew in good order while "B" and "C" companies alternated in establishing rear guard positions. Both of these companies moved by foot, their vehicles having been sent out of the area at the time the order to withdraw had been received. The Battalion withdrew to Sarriensberg, France (Q7441) closing there at about 2300 hours 1 January 1945.

Major Green had contacted Lt. Col. Hodges at Wingen, France and received instructions to withdraw to Rostieg, France, but when he rejoined the Battalion at Sarriensberg, he decided that the Battalion should reorganize there and proceed to Rostieg in the morning. Utilizing fully the commanding ground on which Sarriensberg, was located, the Battalion organized a hasty defensive line with "B" Company on the Eastern and Northern portion of town, "C" company on the Southern and Western edge.

A march order was issued by the Battalion at 020800 January 1945 but enemy patrols were already pushing into our positions. At 1000 hours we learned of a German breakthrough across the road running south of town at 724397 and German Tanks, A.A.A. and Infantry controlled the road at that point. This meant that we had but one road open - that to St. Louis De Bitche. Enemy patrols were aggressively probing our positions, and by 1145 hours a full scale attack was in progress against "B" company at East perimeter. Withdrawing while engaged in these fire fights was impossible, but we managed to send all vehicles except those absolutely necessary to our operations to St. Louis de Bitche.

The attacks against our East positions ("B" company) continued throughout the day, and while they were going on we contacted elements of the 141st Regiment of 36th Division and 179th Regiment of 79th Division who were moving up to Sarriensberg. "C" Troop of the 117th Cavalry was with us and their radio was our only means of getting artillery fire. We also had one officer and 23 men from "C" company 62nd Armored Infantry Battalion and four T.D.'s of Company "B", 645th T.D. Battalion. All of these units were consolidated with our own defense.

During the day ten prisoners of war were taken and the information gleaned from them revealed that the unit attacking us was a part of the 257th V.G. Division.

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During the night of 2 January 45 patrols hit "B" company and were driven off. Enemy personnel were heard digging in and much mortar fire was dropped on them. Tank movement could clearly be heard in the valley east of our positions.

At 030810 we requested air support in the vicinity of 745415. The mission was flown by four P-47's which were guided into the target by an artillery observation plane, and they bombed and strafed troop concentrations in the valley. A prisoner of war which we took later that day testified to the damage done to his unit by the planes.

During the morning German positions were spotted in front of 2-"B". These were the positionsdug by the enemy during the preceding night, and they were subjected to constant mortar and artillery fire. At 1250 hours a German walked in from his fox-hole, and surrendered. By 1420 hours a German Lieutenant had surrendered and brought in what was left of the company he had attacked with the preceding night. A total of nine men, three of whom were wounded.

Tank movement could be heard in the valley, and at 1550 hours tanks and infantry were seen advancing along the road toward "B" company's positions. They were taken under fire by the artillery and a T.D. brought into position. The T.D. knocked out the lead tank which bust into flame at the first round, and the artillery scattered the infantry. The second tank was missed by the T.D. and before another shot could be fired at it, it withdrew.

Throughout this action our positionswere receiving heavy mortar and artillery fire, and a Nebelwerfer ("Screaming Meamie") adjusted on the Battalion C.P. and inflicted much damage, knocking out a light tank parked in front of the C.P.

During the night enemy patrols pushed into our lines but were beaten off. In one instance two German soldiers boldly walked up to a house occupied by another friendly unit, and when challenged, stopped, but refused to drop their weapons. When they started to walk towards the house again they were again told to drop their weapons, and when they replied "Nien" they were shot - at a range of about five yards. This action characterized the boldness of all patrols.

During the night enemy mortars and artillery shelled our positions heavily. Our own mortars were firing at a great many targets as were our assault guns. The C.P. seemed to be in the middle of the barrage and Nebelwerfer projectiles were coming in very frequently.

"B" company was receiving the brunt of all enemy activity and beating it off with practically no casualities to themselves.

On this date, 3 January 1945, Major Green traveled to Wingen, France and contacted Lt. Col. Hodges of the 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron where he gave our situation and was told that we would be relieved by the 45th Division, however the relief was not affected and at a later date we were attached to the 45th Division, which attached us to the 2nd Battalion, 179th Infantry Regiment.

During the early morning hours of 4 January the shelling of our area increased, and at 1000 hours we vacated our C.P. and moved to another location, closer to the C.P. of the 2nd Battalion, 179th Infantry.

By 1400 hours enemy activity had reduced itself to mortar and artillery fire, our right (south) flank, which had been wide open during this period was in the

process of being closed by elements of the 179th Infantry Regiment (the 1st and 3rd Battalions) which were pushing up from the south but were still a considerable distance away, and moving very slowly.

Our own activities throughout the morning were confined to directing mortar and artillery fire on known enemy locations, but at about 1430 an enemy force was spotted moving into positionsabout six hundred yards from our northern perimeter. This location had been under close observation during daylight hours because the sounds of digging and movement had been heard during darkness. Mortar fire from our 81 MM Platoon was directed on the spot, and very shortly enemy soldiers were seen rushing out of a house which had received three direct hits and started to burn. The soldiers dropped into foxholes and the mortars started a systematic pounding of the area. As the house burned a crew of enemy were observed pulling a short barrelled gun mounted on wheels away from the structure. The mortars immediately adjusted on it and the second round killed some of the crew and upset the gun. The gun was then demolished with the next three rounds, and small groups of enemy could be seen running away from the area.

The rest of the day and night was spent laying mortar fire in the defiladed approaches to our position, with two mortars firing intermittently on a building at the Road Junction north of Althorn, France (Q7540) which had been designated as a Battalion C.P. by a prisoner of war. By this time the P.W.'s taken by our own Battalion, and other friendly units in the area had identified nine companies of the 457 Grenadier Regiment as operating against Sarriensberg. P.W. reports on the damage done by our mortar and artillery indicated that we were battering enemy positions, especially the Battalion C.P. at Althorn, with great accuracy.

At 1715 hours 4 January 1945, we dispatched a reconnaissance patrol to determine foremost enemy positions in vicinity of the Cross Roads north of Althorn, They located an 88 MM towed gun at Q74954132. Pushing on further they were halted, then fired on about 50 yards from the gun position.

On the 5 January 1945 enemy activity had resolved itself to intermittent mortar, artillery and nebelwerfer fire. On this date we began to receive artillery of heavier caliber than that previously noted. Rounds estimated to be 240 MM fell regularly on the town.

Our own activities consisted of consolidating our lines, replacing "B" Company with "C" Company to allow "B" Company to relax a bit in the comparatively quiet Southern sector of town. Tentative plans for an attack against German positions in the woods south of town (Q737408) were made.

On 6 January 1945 we were alerted to launch attack thru woods north of Althorn when a Battalion of 179th Infantry approached from the South-West, but that unit did not reach the required position and our activities consited of engaging enemy combat patrols throughout the night after a day devoted to mortar and artillery firing by both sides.

On 7 January 1945 new plans for the attack of the woods at Q737408 were made. "B" Company was to move into woods from assembly position Q736414 with assault guns in direct support. Mortars and artillery were to lay a barrage to be lifted at command of C.O. 2nd Battalion, 179th Infantry.

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The attack jumped off at 1200, "B" Company on left, "E" Company, 179th on right. Both received very heavy mortar fire and machine gun fire as they reached the west edge of woods. A. T. mines prevented assault guns and two tanks from 191st Tank Battalion from moving up, and "B" Company was completely pinned down by mortar and small arms fire, with the 1st Platoon in the woods and the 2nd Platoon on the edge of the woods. As the mortar fire lifted men pushed forward but ran into a curtain of machine gun fire at a draw in the woods and were pinned down again. With the attack stalled by these automatic weapons, Lt. Sweitzer of the Assault Guns made a hasty survey of the ground then led his two M-8 Assault Guns around the mines, thence attacked the woods from the north-west. The M-8's fired directly into the well-dug-in emplacements of the enemy. They accounted for eight machine guns, caused numerous casualties, broke the backbone of the German resistance, and even captured four prisoners.

"B" Company now advanced. Their marching fire effectively silenced the small arms fire of the Germans, and they pushed half-way through the woods to the edge of a deep draw. There they stopped for the night, and dug themselves in solidly. "E" Company, of 179th Infantry was tied in on "B"'s right. "C" Company sent patrol to contact "B"'s left flank, and then spread out along flat terrain to accomplish a tie-in of the two companies, which gave us a solid line from positions 350 yards in woods running generally north to the north edge of Sarriensberg. The flat, open, high terrain made this extension possible and our automatic weapons effectively covered the entire line.

All units held their positions on 8 January 1945 and the attack was not continued because the unit of 179th Infantry which was supposed to be moving up on our right (Southern) flank, had not been able to move as quickly as planned for. There was no German patrol activity in that sector, but patrols were engaged by "C" Company along the entire front of their sector. Prisoners from each of these patrols reported their mission as being "to determine whether the houses were occupied by American troops".

The usual artillery and mortar fire was exchanged by each side — and this situation continued throughout the 9th January also.

During the 9th January 1945 a relief of "B" Company by "C" Company was effected and "C" Company sent out a patrol of twelve men along the north edge of the woods to determine whether the Germans still held the high ground west of the Road Junction at Q758407. The patrol ran into an enemy partol at the corner of the woods in vicinity Q7541 and were pinned down with automatic weapons. The patrol withdrew under cover of "C" Company's heavy machine guns.

During the night of 9-10 January 1945 much enemy vehicular movement was heard in Althorn, and our mortars and artillery harassed the town and road running through it.

At 0700 hours, 10 January 1945, German artillery and mortars laid a very heavy barrage on "C" Company's positions. The heavy shells detonated, for the most part, in the tops of trees, spraying the entire woods held by our troops with a deadly hail of shrapnel. This barrage lasted, without interruption, until 1000 hours, and the only thing that saved "C" Company from more than the six casualties it suffered were the extremely well-built dugouts the men had made. These dug-outs were covered with heavy logs which were packed with twigs, vines, and mud.

At about 1000 hours, 10 January "E" Company of 179th Infantry with two M-8 Assault Guns from 19th Armored Infantry Battalion attached, launched an attack through the woods to Althorn. They pushed through heavy enemy resistance to the edge of town, where the M-8 Assault Guns fired point blank at houses occupied by the Germans, many of whom surrendered, when a Mark IV tank was seen in the middle of town one M-8, commanded by Sgt. Leo Bartus moved out to engage it. The M-8 was knocked out and burned in the resultant uneven battle.

The rest of the Battalion held their positions and were relieved at 0600 hours on 11 January by 2nd Battalion 179th Infantry.

Relief was effected in the following manner "I" Company of 141st Inf. Regt. relieved "B" Company during the night of 10-11 January. "B" Company leaving one platoon behind as a rear guard, marched to St. Louis de Bitche, arriving there before daylight, and moved out, mounted, at 0800 for Ringeldorf, France. Headquarters Company, less Mortar and Assault Guns departed from Sarriensburg with Bn. Hq. Det. vehicles at 0530 and arrived in St. Louis de Bitche at 0600, and departed from there with "B" Company for Ettendorf, France. "C" Company was relieved by "F" Company, 179th Inf. Regt., at 0600 and marched to St. Louis de Bitche by squads, with the 81MM Mortar Platoon and Assault Gun Platoon of Hq. Co., 1st Platoon "B" Co. acted as rear guard, and this march unit departed from St. Louis de Bitche at 0905 hours for Bueswiller, France.

During the march from St. Louis de Bitche the march objective for the Battalion were changed to Forstheim and Laubach, France. Company "A" closed in Lauback and the rest of the Battalion in Forstheim at 1805 hours.

12 January at 0540 the march was resumed. Company "A" and the Medics marched to Hoelschlock and Hq, Hq. Co., B, and C marched to Merkswiller, closing in at 1135, Service Company moved from Ettendorf to Forstheim by infiltration 12 January.

At 2030, 12 January orders were received to move to Niederbetschdorf preparatory to attacking Hatten the following morning. Reconnaissance was made to select a route to the line of departure and to see if it could be reached. At 0300, 13 January the Battalion marched to Niederbetschdorf, closing in there at 0430. The vehicles were left there. At 0630 the Battalion marched to the line of departure.

At 2030 hours on 12 January Major Green received an order from Col. Hudelson of CCR (to which the battalion was attached) to dispatch a ten man patrol led by an officer, to contact the C.O. or S-3 of CCA at Klundendorf, France and obtain answers to the following questions: (1) Is road Kuhlendorf to Niederbetschdorf open to our troops? (2) What is known of enemy dispositions south of Hatten, France? (3) Is enemy in woods south of Hatten and Rittershoffen? (4) Can Road Junction at 187326 (south-east of Hatten) be reached? (5) Is the stream south east of Hatten fordable? (6) Do roads from Niederbetschdorf allow for passage of vehicles into woods south of Hatten and Rittershoffen? The patrol was directed to reconnoiter the area south of Hatten and obtain answers to any questions that CCA couldn't answer, and to be back at 2400 hour. The patrol returned with information that (1) Road Kuhlendorf Niederbetschdorf was open. (2) There were no enemy in either the woods south

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of Hatten nor the field north of the woods. (4) Nothing definite could be determined about R. J. at 187326, as time limit did not allow for reconnaissance. (5) Not answered. (6) Roads from Niederbetschdorf were negotiable by vehicle. With this information the following attack order was issued: Germans hold most of Hatten in unknown strength. One Battalion of friendly infantry in western edge of town, cut off. CCA attacking in Rittershoffen, CCB is north of Rittershoffen, in Corps reserve. CCR attacks Hatten from south with mission of reestablishing M.L.R. east of Hatten, advancing to east astride railroad tracks with 47th Tank Bn (-) on left, 19th A.I.B. with 3-C,47th attached on right. Artillery will shell Hatten, and smoke south-east portion of Hatten from 0800-0845. L.D. is road running south from station south of Rittershoffen at 160328. Units cross L. D. at 0800.

Our Battalion jumped off at 0800 with Company "A" on the left, "B" on the right, "C" in reserve. Assault Gun Platoon supported with fire on R.R. Station south of Hatten. Machine Gun Platoon supported A Company, Mortar Platoon supported Battalion. 3rd platoon C of 47th attached one section (3 tanks) to A Company. 1 section (2 tanks) to "B" company. Under the cover of the smoke the companies moved across the bullet swept field in good order, but as they approached the edge of Hatten the fire of a great number of automatic weapons and a heavy mortar and artillery barrage pinned them down. "C" Company in reserve, moved through the north edge of the woods to the south , but when artillery started to fall on them they were stopped and forced to find shelter from the shrapnel of tree-bursting artillery and mortar. "A" and "B" Companies continued to creep forward as best they could; the tank platoon attached to the battalion attempted to engage the automatic weapons which were pinningdown "A" and "B" companies, but lost two tanks to German AT guns. By their creeping and crawlingmethods, A and B companies managed to get within 200 yards of the town, but there they were completely stopped and at 1055 a smoke screen was laid by artillery to permit them to withdraw.

By 1430 all companies had withdrawn and were reorganizing along the original L.D. preparatory to either launching another attack, or taking up a defensive position between Rittershoffen R. R. Station and the north edge of the woods.

At 1630 hours orders from CCR were received directing that the battalion go into Hatten on tanks and reinforce the unit then in there. At 1650 "A" company went into Hatten's south western edge followed by "B" and C companies in that order. By 1800 hours all rifle companies were in the edge of the town, and Hq. Co. remained in position south of Rittershoffen with its machine guns, mortar, Assault gun and reconnaissance platoons to establish a defensive line from the R. R. Station to the edge of the woods.

In Hatten "A" company took up positions on the northern perimeter, "B" company moved in with "E" company of 315th and "C" company moved into position on southern perimeter.

On the night of 13th January we received an order to continue the attack in the morning in conjunction with 2nd Bn. 315th Infantry. Company "A" with two medium tanks attacked jumped off on the morning of 14 January and moved onto the north street. After a bitter house-to-house battle in which they mouse-holed their way through houses, they succeeded in taking the street, knocking out a Mark IV tank with a bazooka, and captured the 4-man crew. One of the attached tanks was lost when it got ahead of the infantry and washit by a German bazooka. Its crew was captured, but the driver, who had been wounded

was left in a house and when our troops took the house he was evacuated.

"A" Company made a junction with "E" of 315th Infantry but soon after that both companies were stopped by fire from strong German positions. Just before dark the Germans launched a strong counter-attack along the street, with two tanks on the street and a column of infantry on each side. After a heavy exchange of small-arms fire both "A" and "E" were ordered to withdraw which they did with great difficulty and under a constant stream of machine gun fire from the tanks and emplacements on the high ground north of the town.

Throughout the night of the 14th mortar and artillery fell heavily on our positions, and an enemy patrol that penetrated to the center of the sector was engaged in a fire fight that resulted in the capture of four and the killing of five, the total of nine representing the entire patrol. During the night of 14 January and early morning of 15 January a strong German attack was launched against "F" Company 315th Infantry who held the Eastern perimeter. After a short battle in which German flame-throwers and bazookas set fire to two houses, "F" company fell back four housed and from the new positions, beat off the German attempt to follow up their gains. Throughout the daylight hours of 15 January a great amount of mortar and artillery was fired by both sides, and "B", 19th replaced "F" of 315th in the eastern perimeter, the companies were re-organized and positions were developed to afford better coverage of the surrounding terrain.

By this date (15 Jan) troops opposing the battalion had been identified as being from the 21st Panzer Division, 125th Panzer Grenadier Regt and 22nd Panzer Regt., both units of the 21st Panzer Division had parts of their units in Hatten. During the afternoon of 15 Jan the battalion received an order to launch an attack on the main street, move to the eastern end of town and make a junction with elements of the 47th which were to come in from the south. "C" Company was designated to attack. Two medium tanks from 47th Tank Bn. were in support of "C". As "C" assembled for the attack a terrific mortar barrage was laid on the area by the Germans and the assembly broken up three times before the attack finally got underway in darkness. As the men of "C" Company moved onto the main street the tank which was going out with the leading element moved out and mortar fire on the street junction completely scattered the infantry. As the infantry were reorganizing the tank was knocked out by another American tank and the infantry went down the street with no tank support, as the crippled, burning tank completely blocked the street. "C" Company moved down to the first road junction on the main street and there they ran into a strong German defensive position. They were unsuccessful in their attempts to outflank the position and finally fell back a short distance to reorganize.

On 16 Jan. "C" Company continued their attack but by 1300 hours they were pinned down by small arms fire from both north and south as they moved east. In the afternoon, one platoon of "A" Company jumped off to attack the north street and entered the first house with a short fight capturing two Germans who were members of the 125th P.G.R., part of the 21st Panzer Division. Immediately after occupying that house the platoon started into the next house and caught in a heavy cross fire of small arms, and found itself faced by enemy on three sides. Another platoon of Company "A" was sent to the spot and laid down heavy automatic weapons fire to allow that platoon to withdraw.

The remainder of the day and night was spent in reorganizing our units, while the usual mortarand artillery fire fell in the area. During the night an enemy team consisting of one Mark IV tank and a squad of infantrymen moved to a position about 100 yards from Company "C"'s eastern-most position.

At 0800 hours on 17 Jan. Company "A" received heavy small arms fire from the east, and by 0850 the fire had become a full attack with troops moving in against "C" Companu, and it fell back two houses in the face of direct tank fire from the main street. We brought in artillery, mortar, and small arms fire on the area occupied by the attacking German troops and the small arms and bazooka fire from that area ceased shortly afterwards. By 2200 hours the sector was very quiet, with only occasional mortar rounds falling instead of the usaul constant drumming. However, a new (to us) type of shell came in and burst with a time-fuse arrangement, emitting a shower of aparks, but no fragmentation. In daylight we discovered propaganda leaflets, and surmised that they came from these shells. "B" Company replaced "C" on the eastern perimeter of defense during the night. "C" company took up positions along the southern flank. At 0530 on 18 January an enemy tank moved up along the main street until it was within 150 yards of "B" company's outpost. Artillery was adjusted on it and the tank moved back, fired three rounds into one of the houses occupied by our troops, then withdrew completely.

The 18th was the most quiet day we had in Hatten, and except for the usual mortar and artillery fire, our positionswere not molested until 1820 when a sudden burst of small arms fire hit "B" Company's outpost. The tank returned to its position on the main street and fired once, against "B" Company's positions.

"A" Company on the north spotted enemy trying to infiltrate and adjust mortar fire on the. When this was ineffective they adjusted artillery and forced a withdrawal of the group.

Things remained quiet after that brief skirmish, and soon "B" Company reported that the tank had withdrawn again, and that everything was quiet in their sector. At 0720 houms on 19 January a sudden barrage of mortar and artillery hit our positions. 120 and 85 MM mortar shells, some with delay fuse started falling in such profusion that it was impossible to get a count; they drummed steadily on all buildings, completely crumbling many walls and buildings. Our C.P. was hit directly eight times and casualties among the guards at the windows and doors were quite high. The barrage continued until 0915 and at its peak we were receiving direct tank fire from the ridge north of the town as well as along the main street.

When the barrage lifted enemy personnel moved in against both the northern and eastern defenses, apparently expecting little opposition. They withdrew when they were engaged with small arms fire and our artillery scattered them as they were assembling in the draw along the north street in front of "A" Company's position. Throughout the day enemy patrols probed into our lines, but by 1600 hours everything had quieted down and we were reorganizing what was left of our positions.

At 1700 a tank was spotte firing and artillery brought in on it.

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The night of 18-19 January was exceptionally quiet, and even the mortars were not firing on our positions except very occasionally.

On 20 January we adjusted artillery on German positions in the south east end of Hatten and completely demolished a building from which Germans ran. The unusual quiet extended throughout the day, and even 50 MM mortar fire had replaced the 120 MM stuff to which we'd been accustomed. We received an order to withdraw from Hatten at about 1600 hours. The withdrawal started at 1800 hours, with vehicles and all wounded, followed at fifteen minute intervals by A-94, G-315 (-), A-19 (-), C-19 (-), E-315 (-), F-315 (-), B-19 (-) outposts, rearguards demolitions squad. T.D.'s and tanks, after destroying what equipment we couldn't take out with us.

The units of the battalion assembled in Niederbetschdorf, France then moved by motor convoy to Friedolsheim, France, closing there at 210930 January 1945.

The period 21 January to 31 January 1945 inclusive was spent at Friedolsheim, France reorganizing, re-supplying and training.

The following image(s) may be of poor quality due to the poor quality of the **original**.

~~SECRET~~

HEADQUARTERS
19TH ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION
APO 446 U. S. ARMY

A/A

~~UNIT HISTORY~~

(February 1945)

During the period 1st to 17th February inclusive, the battalion was stationed at Friedolsheim, France (Q815120) with one company ("C") at Sundershein, France (Q825100) from 8th February through 17th February.

All activities of the battalion were limited to rehabilitation of personnel, receipt of reinforcements, (99 in all, thereby bringing the battalion to a strength of forty-one officers and nine hundred sixty-eight enlisted men) receipt of equipment, and scheduled military training, in addition to the Special Services functions which included the staging of a "home-talent" play, motion pictures, and a schedule whereby a quota of officer and enlisted personnel were given passes to Brussels and Paris.

The training engaged in, included the firing of small arms, and heavy weapons, road marches (dismounted) and combat exercises, interspersed with review of basic subjects. The exercises were of two types (1) the night attack of a ridge line by a rifle company (2) the attack of a village by a rifle company, reinforced with artillery (simulated) and a tank platoon (from 47th Tank Battalion). The latter exercise was participated in by each company twice, one exercise involving the attack of Friedolsheim from the north, the other attacking Friedolsheim from the south. The first exercise had each company participate once in the night attack of a ridge.

At 181200 February 1945, the battalion was attached to CC"B", 14th A.D. and received, as an attachment, the 2nd platoon of "C" Company of the 25th Tank Bn.

At 182030 February 1945 Field Order No. 12, CC"B", 14th A.D. was received, directing the battalions to relieve elements of the 409th Infantry Regt. in Ettendorf, Pfaffenheffen, and La Walch, France and assume responsibility for that sector. Company Commanders were given a warning orders and instructed to contact elements they were to relieve at 190800 February 1945.

Field Order No. 3, 19th A.I.R. was issued at 191400 February to assemble company, detachment, and attached units commanders at the Battalion C. P. in Friedolsheim.

The battalion and attached units, marched to Ettendorf, France by company infiltration closing in that town at 192015 February 1945 and immediately commenced the relief of elements of the 409th Infantry.

Company "A" completed the relief of 2nd Platoon "G" Company, 409 at 2245 and occupied the M.L.R. on the high ground south of Pfaffenheffen, France. "C" Company occupied positions in Ettendorf, France and constituted Battalion reserve. Headquarters Company attached the heavy machine-gun platoon to "B" Company, installed 81mm mortar platoon in positions south of the M.L.R. with a mission of providing

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general support for the battalion; set the assault guns in positions in vicinity of Attendorf, tied them in with the 501 F.A., F.L.C. for direct support of the battalion, and utilized the reconnaissance platoon to operate two observation posts twenty-four hours daily, in addition to maintaining a mounted patrol to contact C.P. of the unit on our left.

Battalion C.P. was established in Attendorf. On 20 February 1945 the battalion sent patrol No. 1 (S/Sgt Hildebrand of "C" Company and 4 men) to reconnoiter the high ground south of La Walck, to determine whether enemy were occupying the position. The patrol left our O.P.L.R. at 200100 February 1945, reached its objective, drew no enemy fire and returned without incident.

The battalion organized its snipers under one officer (Lt. Sleper of "B" Company) to snipe at German positions from sniper posts along our O.P.L.R.

"A" Company on the O.P.L.R. organized its positions, to make a solid front to prevent German patrols slipping through. Surveys of the area were made and plans drawn up to construct additional concertina wire, trip flares, and anti-tank mines along the O.P.L.R.

"B" Company occupied the M.L.R. along the high ground south of Raffenhoffen, made surveys of the positions, and drew up plans to construct such additional wire entanglements gun emplacements, trip flares, and fox-holes required to make the line an impregnable one. Anti-tank platoon of "B" Company occupied positions on the left flank of the M.L.R.

"C" Company as battalion reserve, occupied positions in Attendorf, France, outposted that town, and prepared positions around the perimeter of the town for its defense.

Headquarters Company attached its machine-gun platoon to "B" Company, setup the 81mm mortars in positions in back of the M.L.R. to support "A" and "B" companies. The 105mm assault gun platoon occupied firing positions on the north edge of Attendorf, set up its F.O.P.C. in the F.O.P.C. of the 501 F.A. Bn., and fired missions in direct support of the battalion. Service Company remained at Friedolsheim, France and transported supplies to the battalion by truck.

During the period 210001 February 1945 through 282400 February 1945, the battalion remained in the defensive positions in that sector and carried out an extensive construction program which resulted in a more secure O.P.L.R. and M.L.R. with much concertina wire, many trip flares, additional anti-tank mines, and a great many gun emplacements and fox-holes being installed. The R.A.L. was organized and fox-holes and gun emplacements dug.

In addition to the improvement in the lines mentioned above, the following patrols, raids, and attacks by fire were participated in by the battalion.

At 202000 February 1945 Lt. Osborn and seven men, all of "C" Company, formed reconnaissance patrol No. 2, and reconnoitered the high ground south of Ditschoffen France. They located a 3-man machine-gun outpost who fired at them, then ran off towards Ditschoffen.

At 220200 February 1945, Lt. Osborn of "C" Company led a raiding party of two men which had the mission of capturing the machine gun outpost located by

the reconnaissance patrol on 20 February 1945. The party assaulted the position but discovered they were empty. They then reconnoitered all of the surrounding area finding many positions, all of them empty.

At 221930 S/Sgt Jensen of "C" Company led a patrol of four men, with mission of ascertaining condition of bridge north of Bitschhoffen. The patrol crossed the Kindwiller-Bitschhoffen road, were challenged by a German guard and fired upon as they withdrew. They continued further to the east but were finally forced to withdraw completely when fired upon from Bitschhoffen. At 240100 February 1945 S/Sgt Imbloudil of "B" Company led a nine-man patrol with mission of ambushing German patrols. They reached the cross-roads between Kindwiller and Bitschhoffen, and laid in ambush until time to return to his own lines without seeing any Germans. The patrol brought back two teller mines from a mine-field found on the cross-roads.

At 242000 February 1945 Lt. Levine of "B" Company led a four-man patrol towards western edge of Bitschhoffen, with the mission of capturing a P.W. They heard many sounds of enemy personnel but could not locate any and finally withdrew without completing the mission, but with much information of mine fields and emplacements unoccupied. At 251100 February 1945 Lt. Auer of "A" Company led a 4-man patrol to the ridge north of La Walck, with the mission of taking a P.W. The patrol moved boldly across the open, sloping terrain, reached the limit of patrol route, located enemy emplacements, a mine-field, barbed wire entanglements, but contacted no Germans. It returned at 1300 hours without incident.

At 252200 February 1945 Lt. Lingle led a 10-man patrol from "C" Company up to the mission road just south of Bitschhoffen. They were to set up an ambush to capture a P.W. They heard a group of Germans some distance north of their positions and saw two Germans on the mission road. As the ambush party spread out to encompass the area thru which the Germans would walk a machine - gun opened up on Lt. Lingle's party from a position east of the La Walck-Bitschhoffen road. Warned by the fire the two Germans dashed into hiding beyond the crest of the ridge. The patrol eventually withdrew under intermittent small arms fire and returned to our lines.

During the 25th of February a plan for a company-sized raid on Bitschhoffen was prepared and Captain [illegible] Battalion of "C" Company was briefed on the raid at 2000 hours. Preparation for artillery and small arms supporting fires were completed and "C" Company made its plans and briefed its personnel.

The 26th February was spent in completing the study of plans for the raid on Bitschhoffen. All non-commissioned officers were shown the ground over which the raid would move. Aerial photos were studied carefully, and all information previously concerning the area to be raided was carefully disseminated.

On the night of 26-27 February the moon cast a brilliant yellow light over the terrain, making visibility very good and at 270200 February the raid jumped off. There was no artillery preparation, and two flank security detachments moved out on the land, traveling diagonally to the flanks, one going to the east and the other to the west, to set up their machine guns on terrain giving them observation and grazing fire along the flanks of the raiding party.

The raid plan called for Lt. Osborn with the 1st platoon on the left side of the La Walck-Bitschhoffen road and Lt. Lingle with the 2nd platoon on the right side of the road. Lt. Young had the third platoon in support on the left side of the road.

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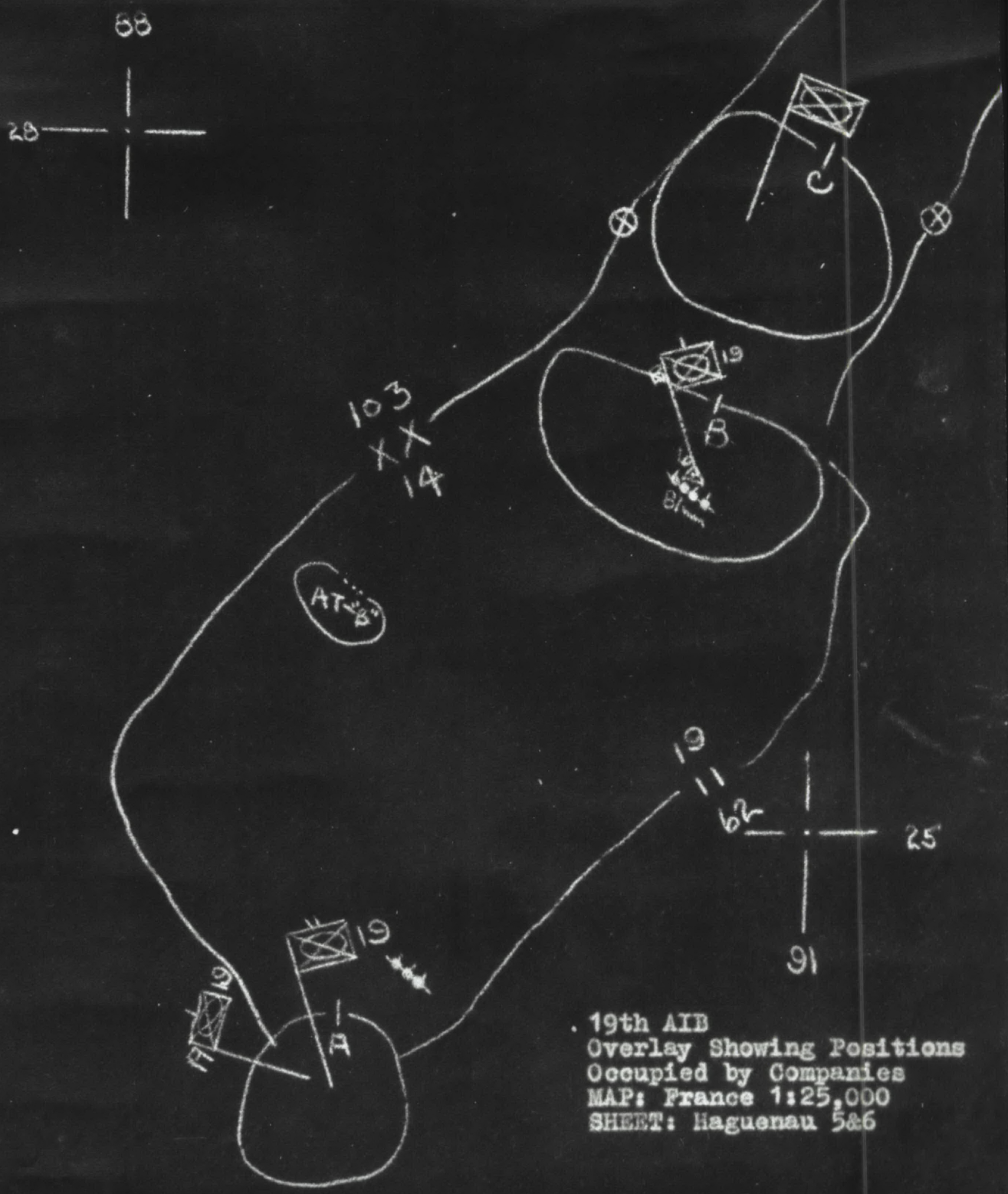

19th AIB
Overlay Showing Positions
Occupied by Companies
MAP: France 1:25,000
SHEET: Haguenau 5&6

The two leading platoons were to assault the southern edge of town, move down the two streets to easily determined positions, then withdraw with as many prisoners as it was possible to take. Before reaching the assault position the platoons had to make their way through a mine field of anti-tank and AP mines. While his platoon was picking its way through the field Lt. Lingle lost contact with his right flank security detachment. As he personally went over to check this flank his platoon was taken under German machine-gun fire from Bitschhoffen and positions east of Bitschhoffen. Mortar fire then began to fall on "C" Company's zone and one man in the 1st platoon was killed. The 2nd platoon pushed ahead until it was heavily engaged in a small arms fight, and an ammunition carrier was killed when he crawled onto a shu-mine.

When the 2nd platoon pinned down and medium-trajectory flak fire starting to fall in the area from a gun in the woods east of Bitschhoffen, Lt. Johnson, who had his platoon in position for the assault, had to hold up his assault in order to insure that his right flank be covered. Completely disorganized by the small arms and mortar fire, the 2nd platoon withdrew and before the third platoon could replace them down broke and the order for the withdrawal of the company was issued. This was accomplished, and a count revealed five casualties (three killed and two wounded)

At 271100 February 1945 Sgt Johnson of "A" Company led an 8 man patrol to recover the body of one man killed in the raid of that morning. They accomplished the mission with no difficulty.

On 20th February "C" Company relieved "A" Company on the O.P.L. in La Valois. The anti-tank platoon of "A" Company was attached to "C" Company (whose A.T. platoon was acting as security detachment for CO"B" headquarters) and the rest of "A" Company reverted to battalion reserve.

At 280300 February 1945 patrol number nine of 10-men went out with the mission of taking a P.W. The patrol went to the crest of the ridge south of Bitschhoffen, waited in ambush for fifty minutes, patrolled farther south, then returned to our lines at 0518 hours, with information on new but unoccupied German positions along the ridge.

At the close of the month, the battalion was occupying defensive positions as indicated on the accompanying overlay. "C" Company was on the O.P.L. "B" Company on the M.L.R. and "A" Company in battalion reserve, outposting the town of Rittershoffen.

RESTR

HEADQUARTERS
19TH ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION
APO 446 U. S. ARMY

BATTALION HISTORY 6 May 1945

010001 March 1945 to
312400 March 1945

The Battalion was occupying defensive positions in Pfaffenhofen and LaWalch, France, engaged in active patrolling and raiding against opposing enemy groups in Bitschoffen, France, as the month of March began. With "C" Company on the outpost Line of Resistance in La Walch, "B" Company on the Main Line of Resistance in Pfaffenhofen and "A" Company in Battalion reserve in Ettendorf, France.

At 010300 March, a raiding party of 55 men, led by Lt. Auer, all of "A" Company hit the southern end of Bitschoffen with the mission of taking a prisoner. A heavy fire fight with German outposts resulted in theraid being broken up without accomplishing its mission, but the party brought back much valuable information on the disposition of enemy troops, mines (both A.T. and personnel) and new defensive works.

During the 2nd March 1945 the battalion continued the improvement of its positions and sent out a reconnaissance patrol which was unwittingly taken under fire by a neighboring friendly unit and forced to return. The matter was taken up through regular military channels, and cleared up.

At 021700 March 1945 Operational Instruction No. 2, Hq 14th Armored Division was received, directing that the 68th Arm'd Inf Bn would relieve 19th A.I.B., prior to 070600.

During the 3rd March, tentative arrangements for the relief of the battalion by the 68th were made with representatives of CC"A". The usual contact patrols with flanking units were maintained, and at 1700 hours a coordinated fire plan, resulting in the employment of all available weapons, covered the wooded area East of Bitschhoffen with concentrated fire.

March 4th was spent in routing patrolling, improvement of defensive positions and targets determined from observation, and information received from P.W.'s were engaged by mortars, assault guns, and machine guns. At 1900 hours, operational Memorandum No. 32 was received, which directed the relief of CC"B" by "CCA". The relief became effective at 2000 hours.

On 5 March 45 the routine patrolling of the zone, and continuation of work on the defensive positions occupied the battalion until 1800 hours, at which time a coordinated fire plan, directing the employment of all weapons on Bitschhoffen and and the wooded area east of it. Following the firing a propaganda broadcast was directed through the public address system towards the enemy.

At 1000 hours, 6 March 45 Major Green issued the march order to become effective upon completion of the relief of the battalion, and by 2400 hours the entire battalion was on the road to the new area the relief by 68 having been completed at 2332.

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"A" Co. was attached to 47th Tank Battalion, and moved out of Uhlwiller at 2000 hours. All attachments to this battalion (C47, 2B94, 1B125) were received and assembled in Ohlungen by 2200.

At 160800 March 45 a German deserter was picked up by "B" Co. and more information regarding the German positions was obtained.

A unit commanders meetingwas held and all commanders briefed on the probable employment of the Combat Command, and the organization of the battalion and attachments into a combat patrol of reinforced company strength, acting as the advance party of the battalion column. Probable routes to be followed, probable enemy strong points, and the manner and necessity of by-passing these points were discussed.

The battalion alert was changed to a two hour status and "B" company continued to screen the battalion front with active patrols and a skelton outpost. These activities continued throughout the 17th March, and on the 18th the battalion combat patrol, consisting of C19, 1C47th Tk Bn, 2B94 Recon Sqdr, 1 B125 Engrs, Tank Dozer of 47th Tk Bn, and Battery "A" 499 A.F.A. Bn. was alerted and assembled at Schweighausen. All other units in the battalion were placed on a one hour alert, as of 0855.

At 181425 March, orders directing the movement of the battalion were received, and the battalion moved out at 1525, proceeding through the Haguenau Forest to Schwabwiller, where the battalion C.P. was set up, with the last vehicle closing in at 1800, and the town defense being set up by 1900 hours.

The battalion was placed on another one hour alert at 190940 March 45, and the Combat Patrol put on a 30 minute alert. At 1830 hours a warning order, directing movement of the battalion sometime that night, was received, and the Reconnaisseance platoon, reconnoitered the bridge between Hatten and Buhl. The platoon returned with information that the bridge was completed at 1900 hours. The battalion billeting party left at 2000 hours, and at 200710 March the battalion crossed an I.P. outside of Schwabwiller and closed into Schleithal, France at 0915.

The battalion was placed on a forty-five minute alert upon arrival in Schleithal, and outposted the town and immediate vicinity relieving Task Force Blue, of the 68th Inf. of this chore. Contact with the 1st French Army on the right was made and maintained; liaison with CC"A" of 14th A.D. was established, and routes to Schaidt and Freckenfeld, and through the forest north of Scheithal were reconnoitered.

At 220935 March, the battalion alert was changed to 90 minutes, until 1630 hours, when it was changed to an instant alert and all vehicles were readied with complete loads, including personnel. At 1830 hours the alert was changed again - this time to a one hour status, and Operational Instruction No. 8 Hq CC"B", 14th A.D. was received at 1840 hours, which designated route, march order and objective.

At 230400 March the battalion was ordered to execute provisions of O.I. #8, and the entire battalion was on the road at 0507 hours, moving through Wissembourg, thence west and north, crossing the German border at 230700 March 45 and entering the assembly area at Silz, Germany at 0815 hours.

During the later stages of this movement the battalion was moving in the zone of action of the 103rd Inf. Div. along a road strewn with the wreckage of German artillery and supply trains, which had, for the most part, been horse-drawn.

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RESULTS

As the leading elements of the combat patrol reached the crest of the high ground outside the city, and started down the slight, gradual slope that led to the open terrain and the city proper, they were taken under fire by anti-tank guns (77 & 88 mm) mortar, artillery, and small arms. One tank was knocked out but not before a German self-propelled gun was destroyed as it attempted to move to the southern flank of our units.

With evidence of a strong force defending the city, the remainder of the battalion was ordered into the engagement and arrived at the spot to find the combat patrol disorganized and suffering a few casualties from artillery and mortar fire in the wooded area it had withdrawn to.

The decision to attack across the open terrain with tank-infantry teams on either side of the road, following closely on the heels of an artillery preparation was made after a quick reconnaissance of the terrain. Company "A" was re-organized and moved to the line of departure on the edge of the woods, north of the road (Which was the axis of advance) and with its right flank on the road. Company B moved to the south side of the road and with each company was a company of medium tanks as supporting elements.

The medium tanksengaged enemy positions by fire, moving into and out of the western edge of the woods, while the infantryman occupied foxholes and dugouts to protect themselves from the artillery and mortar shrapnel running down on the area from tree-top burstingshells. The enemy were even using A.P. shot which sheared off tree tops but didn't hit any of the tanks.

At approximately 1510 hours the waves of tanks and infantry crossed the line of departure and moved across the open terrain, engagine enemy positions with all available weapons, while another Tank Company, in reserve, added its fire power to the assault from positions along the crest of the high ground.

The leading elements reached the town at 1530 hours and immediately moved down the highway, by-passing the center of town, clearing houses of snipers and machine-gunners as they pushed aggressively along the shortest route to the bridge site. A road block halted the column of tanks a short distance from the River but a foot reconnaissance determined that both the highway and railroad bridges which spanned the Rhine at that point were blown.

With their primary mission of seizing the bridge intact nullified by the bridge's destruction, the infantry and tank teams swing back through the heart of the city and began clearing the many stone structures of the snipers and machine gunners that had been harassing the troops, At this time "C" Company was committed to speed up the operation. At dark the companies halted their activities, outposted their areas and reorganized as best they could, while German artillery and heavy mortar fire fell in the city throughout the night.

The day's activities had resulted in the total destruction of numerous German anti-tank guns and automatic weapons, including 20mm A.A. guns employed as ground defense weapons, the capture of over a thousand prisoners, the seizing of the enemy barracks and administration buildings, used by the large garrison stationed there, and capture of large stores of ammunition and weapons.

At 250800 March 1945 the companies launched a continuation of their mopping-up and house-to-house clearing operations. By 1400 hours the town was completely, cleared "B" Company was occupying positions on the bank of the Rhine, A, C, and Hq Companies were outposting the town and the re-supply and re-organization of the battalion was instituted with the knowledge that the forces would be on the move again when relief was accomplished by elements of the 36th Division.

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Apr 45

BATTALION HISTORY
0100A April 1945 To 302400 April 1945

The battalion was bivouaced in vicinity Oberhausen, Germany and alerted to move on order to execute O.I. #9, Hq. CC"B", 12th Arm'd Div., as the month of April 45 commenced. Orders were received directing that the battalion execute provisions of the O.I. already received, at 0330 hours, and at 0357 the battalion was on the road, moving towards the I.P. at Kappellan, Germany which was crossed at 0[illegible] hours.

The route took the battalion through Bergzabern, Landau, Kirrweiler, Geinsheim, Meckenheim, Niederkirchen, Weisenheim, Frankenthal, Pfeddersheim, thence across an engineer pontoon bridge which spanned the Rhine river a short distance south of Worms (crossing was made at 011130 April 1945 in clear sunny, weather) and on through Biblishausen, and Darmstadt to the assembly area in Habitsheim, Germany, where the battalion closed at 011600 April 1945.

At 02001 April 1945 instructions received from Headquarters, CC"B", required that the battalion to be alerted to move on a moment's notice. Company Commanders were called together and orders for the alert issued. All watches and other time pieces were set ahead one hour at 0200 as the area the battalion was in was in time zone "B"—and at 0345 orders were received directing an immediate move across the Main River, to exploit a breakthrough of German defense lines accomplished by the 3rd U.S. Infantry Division.

The battalion moved out of Habitsheim at 0357 hours 2 April 1945, cleared the I.P. at Lengfeld, Germany at 0418 hours, crossed the Main River at Werth, Germany on a pontoon treadway bridge, then moved through the rear elements of the 3rd US Inf. Div. following the route through Erlinbach, Mechenhard, Sheit, Aschau, Winterbach, Krausenbach, thence northeast to Bischbornerhof, east to Rechenbach, where the advance elements of the 3rd Inf Div. were clearing the remaining rear guard elements of the enemy from the high ground east of the town.

Passing through the 3rd Inf. Div. at this point, the column ran into a road block approximately two kilometers outside of Rechtenbach, which was quickly demolished by tank fire, and the column continued towards Lohr. Immediately after passing the road block the column began to receive heavy sniper fire, from the high ground east of the road, and as the head of the column reached the outer perimeter of Lohr itself it received heavy sniper and automatic weapons fire from the high ground at the west end of the city.

Despite this fire the column moved into Lohr at 1[illegible]15 hours, crossed a bridge spanning the railroad that cut through the city, after passing a German Pz IV tank, destroyed by its own crew when it was caught by our column, and into the principal square in the city. As the leading half track reached the center of the square it was hit by a German "bazooka" and burst into flames. This seemed to be the signal for all enemy to open fire and as the infantrymen dismounted from their half-tracks a fierce fire fight commenced with automatic weapons, snipers and bazooka" teams occupying positions in buildings and behind stone walls, spraying the area of the square with bullets and shrapnel. This fire fight lasted about fifteen minutes, then the enemy was driven back and tanks and infantrymen rolled through the square, past the burning vehicles, and turned north, with the idea of by-passing the very heavily defended center of the town.

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As the leading tank reached the grade railroad crossing that is on the northwestern edge of town, it was knocked out by a German bazooka and another fierce fire fight ensued. "C" Co. doughboys battled their way to a bridge site just outside the town, and determined, by personal observation, that the bridge was blown, with no apparent by-pass available. Thus stalemated, "C" Co. was ordered to hold its position while "B" Co, accompanied by light tanks from "D" 47th Tank Battalion, attempted to by-pass the town by moving across country south of the town and reach a thru road at the eastern end of the town. This group ran into heavy opposition and darkness settled before they could overcome the stubborn defense, so all troops remained in position for the night and prepared to resume the attack in the morning.

At 0700 on 3 April 45 "A" Co. 19th with a platoon of medium tanks from "C" 47th attached, attack straight down the main street of town, while "C" 19 with its attached tanks, and "B" 19, now attached to 47th Tank Bn., continued to hold both flanks. When "A" 19th had reached a point approximately half-way through the city, "C" Co. was ordered to attack east, through the northern section of the city, and the 47th Tank Bn with "B" Co. attached, launched an attack to slice thru the eastern edge of the city.

Caught by the sudden attacks on his flanks, the enemy attempted to withdraw his troops, but Hq. Co. 19th had placed its Assault Guns, 81mm mortars and heavy machine guns on commanding terrain at the west end of the town and supplemented the completely observed artillery fires that were placed on the German troops as they moved towards Gaskenbach with direct fire from all the weapons. Enemy casualties were heavy and the defensive positions into which the German troops were moving became untenable and the badly disorganized troops spread out with no semblance of a defensive line.

When "B" 19 and "D" 47 reached the bridge at the north-eastern edge of town they found it completely destroyed, but a hastly reconnaissance revealed a small bridge that had been overlooked by the retreating enemy and, seizing the opportunity to strike a decisive blow, the infantry-tank team dashed into Gaskenbach and engaged the disorganized enemy in a heavy, swiftly-moving fire fight that completed the demoralization and defeat of the German troops, while inflicting severe casualties on the badly-battered ranks of enemy defenders.

Determined to exploit the severe beating given the Germans, "A" 19th riding on the decks of its attached tanks, passed through "B" 19th and its light tanks to continue the attack with the mission of seizing Neuendorf, Germany (R3464) and outposting it for the night. This mission was accomplished with little difficulty, and German troops in that town were either killed, driven off, or captured. The close of the days fighting found "B" 19th and "D" 47th occupying Gaskenbach; "A" 19th with attached platoon of "B" 47th in Neuendorf, and the balance of the battalion, along with the balance of 47th Tank Bn. in Lohr. Total prisoners taken was more than three hundred and fifty, with a battalion staff included, an undetermined number of dead and wounded, two tanks, many trucks and horse-drawn vehicles destroyed.

Casualties suffered by the battalion were comparatively light, in view of those inflicted on the enemy, with a total of eight (8) killed and thirty one (31) wounded. Some of these were caused by our own artillery which fell short, landing in the midst of some of our troops. Other casualties were suffered when a medium tank on which members of "A" 19th were riding, was hit by a German panzerfaust.

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The following image(s) may be of poor quality due to the poor quality of the **original**.

Three members of Medical Detachment, 19th had been captured during the day (2 April 45) when they ventured too far into Lohr to give aid to wounded. They were waiting for our troops when the town was cleared on the 3rd, and attested to excellent treatment at the hands of the Germans, who did not even search them, and used them (and their 1/4 Ton truck) to administer to the wounded in a hospital, and evacuate a German officer casualty to a hospital deeper in Germany.

Preparations for continuation of the attack in the morning were completed in the night, and at 0400 April 45, the battalion moved out of Lohr, picking up each element at Sackenbach, and Neuendorf, on its way to Langenprozelten and Gemunden, Germany.

As the head of the column reached Langeprozelten scattered small arms fire forced the leading vehicle—a light tank— to "button up", whereupon it was hit by a panzerfaust, and burst into flames. Immediately dismounting, "C" Co. infantry-men with attached medium tanks, drove aggressively into the town, seising the high ground north of the road, where snipers were dug in, then moved up the main street, in a savage, house-to-house drive that swept the scattered German troops before them. Attached tanks, tank destroyers, and Assault Guns from firing positions along the road leading into the town, could engage groups of German soldiers, attempting to escape along the south edge of town, and their well-directed fire destroyed many such groups. At the same time enemy groups, observed in the vicinity of Rotstetten (south of Langeprozelten) were engaged by artillery, which also neutralized other targets in that area.

By 1400 hours the town was cleared, and the column started to move again, but as the head of the column crossed the railroad tracks east of the town, mortar and artillery shells commenced falling along the road. The vehicles moved thru the light barrage, until stopped by heavy small arms, anti-tank and mortar fire just west of Gemunden, Germany (MH064).

The leading tank, attempting to go thru an underpass into the town was hit by a panzerfaust and burst into flames. The two tanks following it were blocked by the burning tank, and eventually one of these was disabled by a panzerfaust and the other was stuck when it left the road and was mired in mud.

"C" 19th and "A" 19th dismounted, and moved into position along the western edge of the railroad embankment where the tracks ran north-east in front of Gemunden, while tanks of the 47th Tank Bn. supported the action from positions on the high ground west of Gemunden.

Initially pinned down by murderous automatic weapons firing across their front both "A" and "C" 19th, were unable to move, but during lulls in the enemy firing were able to spread out and inch along towards the railroad tracks that ran into town. These tactics eventually enabled them to knock out an enemy machine gun, and a group of snipers, that were emplaced along the tracks.

In view of the heavy opposition being encountered, the rifle companies were ordered to halt their advances, hold the ground they occupied, and wait for supporting aircraft to bomb and strafe the town.

While waiting the arrival of the aircraft, all Assault guns, tank destroyers, and the rocket tank, in addition to all tanks and 81mm mortars were emplaced west of Gemunden and fired a thunderous barrage into the town, directed against targets from which enemy fire was being received. In the midst of this barrage, the aircraft— eight P-47 and two P-51 fighter bombers arrived and bombed and strafed the city leaving [illegible] ruins where [illegible] delay-action

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bombs shattered whole buildings, and added their .50 caliber bullets to the shrapnel from the artillery, tank, tank destroyer, rocket tank and mortar barrage.

Following this very effective treatment of the town "C" 19th sent one platoon into the town only to be stopped by a blown bridge, necessitating the use of rubber assault boats to establish a bridgehead. This was done in spite of intense sniper fire, and with determined aggressiveness the infantrymen moved rapidly along the main street of the town, engaging in bitter house-to-house fighting throughout that night and the next day. When the town was finally cleared at 1800 hours and friendly units contacted on the flanks. Under cover of darkness engineers built a bridge across the blown span on the night of 5 April 45 and at 0025 hours 6 April 45 a tank dozer crossed the bridge and commenced to clear the streets of rubble that was so thick and heavy that traffic along the streets was impossible. Just as soon as the mission of the tank dozer had been accomplished, the vehicles of the battalion were lined up and moved into town.

A new mission was given the Combat Command "B" during the night of 5 April 45, directing that the Command move to the large German prisoner of War Camp at (T 550675) (vicinity of Hammelburg, Germany) seize the military establishment there, and liberate the estimated fifteen thousand (15000) prisoners that the Germans had in the huge prisoner of war stockade there. As its part of the mission the 19th A.I.B. was to proceed at the head of the column along a route thru Hessdorf (T4663) Bermuland (T5263) Hundsfeld (T5264) thence north towards the objective with the mission of seizing all roads to the south and east of the objective, and prevent evacuation of the camp by the Germans.

The 47th Tank Battalion, to which "B" 19th was attached was to approach the camp from the east and north, and destroy the fences of the camp, thereby liberating the prisoners there.

At 060610 April 45 the battalion moved out of Gemunden, with the column consisting of 1B 9th, A 19th, 1A 47th, 1B 125th, (all as the leading element under Command of C.O. A 19th) Hq and Hq. Co. 19th, A 47th(-), C 19th, Med. Det. 19th, Trains 19th, Gn. Maint. 19th.

A road block halted the column at (T4206?5) and the enemy defending the block were quickly overpowered and either captured, killed, or driven off. The block was then reduced by hand and in very short order the battalion was rolling towards its objective again.

At Hessdorf the head of the column missed a turn and continued to Hollrich, Germany (T4765) and there ran into anti-tank fire when it attempted to turn east to rectify the error made at Hessdorf. Two leading tanks were hit—both had holes punched through their frontal armor, but neither was disabled. Heavy mortar, and artillery fire fell along the road and some casualties were suffered.

In an attempt to get the column moving towards its mission again a heavy artillery, mortar, tank, and tank destroyer barrage was placed on the high ground east of Hessdorf, then "C" 19th dismounted moved up the sharp slope to seize the wooded area on top of the ridge. At the same time "A" 19th with its attachments was ordered to withdraw from its fire fight, break contact, and turn its vehicles around prepared to move along the correct route as soon as "C" Co. cleared the ridge.

(Cont'd) Unit History, 19th Armored Infantry Battalion.

While the 19th was engaged in this manner the 47th Tank Bn. with "B" 19th attached, moved out along its own route towards the prisoner-of-war stockade.

Under cover of the artillery and mortar barrage "C" 19th moved rapidly up the slope to the east, seized the high ground, and observed five American tanks, operated by Germans, being moved into position on a ridge at (T4096[illegible])

Artillery was placed on the tanks to cover the noise of tank destroyers, which were moved into position in the wooded area at (T4096[illegible]) and as soon as the Tank Destroyers were ready the artillery was lifted and the Tank Destroyers completely destroyed all five tanks without having a shot returned.

The entire command then mounted vehicles and moved out of the wooded area across the open, rolling terrain, studded with pill boxes and half-completed "dragon's teeth" tank defenses, with our attached tanks and tank destroyers demolishing each pill box as the column moved toward Bonnland. One German soldier came staggering out of one pill box which had received two or three direct hits, and surrendered--no other enemy were seen.

As the column approached Bonnland it received a scattering of mortar fire, but without slackening speed, the column swung north and moved through Hundsfeld and into the prisoner of war camp which had already been liberated by the 47th tank Battalion. Included in the American Officers liberated (only a few American officers were in the camp, the Germans having evacuated all but those injured and under medical care, and those who hid out with Serb prisoners) was a Lieutenant Jackely of the 9[illegible]th Rec. Sqd. Mead, who had been captured at Lohr, Germany on 2 April 45 while his platoon was attached to 19th A.I.B.

The battalion billeted in the camp that night and prepared to move on order after 120 hours 7 April 1945.

Casualties suffered by the battalion during the action in Langenproselten, Gemunden, Hollrich, Hasdorf, Bonnland, and at the prisoner of war camp were as follows: April 4 (Langenproselten and initial stages of attack on Gemunden) Killed in action: eight (8) (A 19th - 1; B 19th - 5; C 19th -2) Wounded in action: Fourteen (14) (A 19th - 9; B 19th - 3; C 19th - 2) Lightly injured in action: Five (5) (A 19th - [illegible]; B 19th - 0; C 19th - 0) Exhaustion: one officer, 2 enlisted men (A 19th - 1 off, 1 [illegible]; B 19th - 0; C 19th - 1 EM) Total: 1 off, 28 EM (A 19th - 1 off 6 EM; B 19th - [illegible] EM; C 19th - 14 EM)

April 5: (Gemunden) K.I.A. Five (5) (A 19th - 2; B 19th - attached to 47th; C 19th - 3) W.I.A. Six (6) (A 19th - 3; C 19th - 3) Discharged two (2) (Hq. Co. 19th - 2) Exhaustion: One (1) (A 19th -1) Total casualties: Fifteen (15)

April 6: (Hollrich, Hasdorf, Bonnland, P.W. Camp) K.I.A. One (1) (A 19th-1; B 19th - [illegible] total 47th) C 19th - 0; Hq. 19- [illegible]) W.I.A. Five (5) (A 47th (Atchd to 19th) - 5; B 19th (Atchd 19) - 1; A 19th - 0) B 19th - 0; C 19th - 0; Hq 19th-0) Total Casualties Seven (7)

Orders directing an attack to the north-east were received and the battalion moved out of the German military camp at 071300 April 1945 as leading element of the Combat Command, with C 19th; 1A 47th; 1B 47th; 1B 125th; 1B 9[illegible]th, all under command of C.O. 19th as leading element of the battalion. HQ, Hq. Co. 19th; with [illegible] 636th F.A. attached: A 47th (-); A 19th; Trains 19th; and Sec 105th Med Bn; Saint 19th; following in that order.

[redacted], undefended, atop of the column at Fuchstadt (N5770) at 1300 [redacted] knocked out, and the march resumed at 1305. [redacted] road led into a heavily wooded area, cut by many trails not indicated on the maps, and eventually the column got off the correct route and considerable time was lost before the planned route was again reached at Wasserlosen, (N6168) after passing through Dresstbal (N6156).

[redacted] battalion received sporadic time fire artillery as it passed through Dresstbal, and information obtained from the 62nd A.I.B. which was halted in the town, indicated that Wasserlosen was occupied and defended by a German unit.

With this information on hand, Wasserlosen was immediately attack with infantry-tank teams while supporting artillery placed a five minute preparation on the town. [redacted] C 19th with its attached tanks, moved boldly down the road into the northern edge of the town, an American medium tank with German markings painted on it, was spotted in the edge of woods at (N639681) and immediately fired upon by our tanks. The German crew of the tank, caught napping, scrambled out of their disabled vehicle and disappeared in the woods.

The heavy artillery barrage directed at Wasserlosen set fire to many buildings and the infantry-tank teams of C 19th and A 47th moved into and through the town without encountering any enemy opposition.

Upon through Wasserlosen, the battalion moved rapidly east and north towards Orlenbach, but again the map indicated roads that actually did not exist and eventually it was necessary for the column to strike off across country, arriving at the road junction at (N699736) then moving north-east toward Orlenbach. A short distance from that town the road ran into a German oil storage plant which was fenced off—a quick investigation indicated that neither the gate or road were mined, so the medium tank leading the column crashed through the gate, into the enclosure where a fire was found to have destroyed two buildings and was still burning briskly. The establishment was apparently deserted, but as the head of the column approached the eastern gate of the enclosure a number of civilians were observed running towards shelter. This action indicated that enemy soldiers were present and that a battle would take place when the column reached the far end of the enclosure, so infantrymen were immediately dismounted and deployed as security for the leading tank as it continued moving towards Orlenbach.

The eastern end of the oil storage plant was reached without incident, and as the unit continued to move towards the town a column of soldiers, three abreast and about fifteen ranks long was observed standing at the road junction west of Orlenbach. In the rapidly gathering dusk it was impossible to determine whether the enemy soldiers, lined up in parade ground formation, were prisoners of war or not, but it was assumed that they were and so were not fired upon until they broke and ran, whereupon all weapons fired upon them, inflicting severe casualties to the rapidly dispersing soldiers.

Because some of the escaping enemy dashed into the town of Orlenbach and returned our fire from behind buildings, tank guns and .50 cal. machine guns fired into the town, setting fire to a few buildings, before the fire fight concluded with the capture of six of the enemy who sought shelter in the town.

The route to be followed by the battalion did not take it through the town so one platoon of C 19th with two tanks of "A" 47th were left at the road junction and western edge of Orlenbach to secure the column against [redacted] attempt to attack the column at that point, and the [redacted] Ittingshausen, Germany, which was entered at 2200 hours 7 April 1945.

When the head of the column reached the center of Kitzinghausen a German soldier, seen running across the street was captured, and although it was a very dark night with no moon at that time, another German was seen standing in a doorway. He too was quickly seized, although he attempted to slip back through the door. This latter soldier proved to be an officer, and information gleaned from him indicated that there were considerable enemy troops in the town, although it hadn't been outposted nor had any other attempt to defend it been made. This failure was attributed, by the captured officer, to the fact that no American troops had been expected in that vicinity for another three or four days. The column was delayed for a considerable period while spasmodic exchanges of small arms fire took place between our troops and small groups of the enemy, who were very disorganized, and trying to make their way out of town. When the battalion started moving again it carried with it many P.W.'s and left behind it a fire raging in the center of the town.

During the night, orders were received giving priority to the 3rd US Infantry Div. on all roads in that sector, and the battalion was ordered to clear the roads by 0600 hours 8 April 45, so the column was taken off the road and dispersed in the fields and wooded areas vicinity (M697803) where it remained until 1325 hours.

The next move ordered the battalion to lead the combat Command Column to vicinity of Munnerstadt (M7586) and the route led through Bad Kissingen (M6780) Nudlingen (M7083) Munnerstadt, and the battalion billeted in Burglauer (M7489) and Neiderlauer (M7794) (Occupied by C 19, 2B 94, 1B 125).

Placed on a two hour alert, the battalion outposted their towns, organized convoy patrols, and dispatched reconnaissance elements to perform route reconnaissance to a new L.P. at a crossroads north west of Rammingen (M7676).

The battalion received orders to move at 090300 April 45 and left Burglauer at 0415 hours, crossing the I.P. at 0610 hours. The column moved without interruption all the way to Hoppachshof (M8372) with a Combat patrol consisting of one rifle platoon, one section of medium tank, a section of reconnaissance platoon, and a medical 1/4 Ton truck, following a parallel route protecting the west flank of the battalion.

As the head of the column reached Hoppachshof the battalion received an order to halt before reaching Hesselbach (M8470) and so the units were dispersed in the fields between Hoppachshof and Hesselbach. The next order received directed that the battalion launch an attack against Hesselbach, and this was accomplished with C 19 and its attached tanks moving into the town from the north-west, while the Tank Destroyer Platoon, attached to the battalion occupied positions along the high ground just west of Hesselbach, and covered the advance of the attacking units.

From their positions the Tank Destroyers spotted many horse drawn vehicles, in addition to various types of motor vehicles leaving the town via roads to the south and west, and engaged these targets with long-range fire. None of the escaping vehicles succeeded—six horse-drawn vehicles and two motor vehicles that had attempted to escape to the east were completely destroyed, while the personnel in them were all killed, and a column of approximately six vehicles that escaped to the south-west were engaged and destroyed by the Combat patrol on that flank.

(Cont'd) Unit History, 19th Armored Infantry Battalion

C 19th with its tanks swept through Hesselbach with a minimum of resistance, taking a few prisoners, and when they had cleared the town, "A" 19th passed through them, picked up a section of medium tanks from the platoon with "C" Co. and attack east to seize the town of Ottenhausen, Germany (N7086) and the high ground south and east of that town. This mission was accomplished with no resistance being encountered and "A" Co. outposted the high ground, C 19th and Hq. Co. 19th outposted Hesselbach with the battalion C.P. being established in that town. Contact patrols were sent out on regular schedule to adjacent units, and one of these patrols, while attempting to contact friendly units in Uehtelhausen (N8168) ran into enemy outposts and snipers, suffered two casualties and returned after a brief but spirited fire fight during which at least two of the enemy were killed and one wounded.

The battalion remained in Hesselbach and Ottenhausen through 12 April, and at 130600 April Operation Instructions # 14, rescinding # 13 which had been received the preceding day, and a hasty meeting was called, the change in routes made known to the company commanders, and the column moved out of Hesselbach at 0700 hours, arrived in Grossheirath at 1340 hours which became the site of the Bn. C.P. and all units except A 19th and A 47th both of which occupied Dusheered.

The battalion was placed on an immediate alert status, and moved out of Grossheirath (07929) at 132000 April 45.

Combat Command "B" has reverted to Division Reserve with this movement, and followed CC"A" travelling throughout the night at a very slow rate of speed, from Grossheirath south-east to vicinity Rans (03375) thence across the Main river to Staffelstein, (03372) Kleusheim (03164) Schweisdorf (03561) to Schesslets (03658) where the column halted, sent out patrols to reconnoiter the route ahead of it, and to contact adjacent units.

The march was resumed at 141340 April 45 and the battalion reached Trecunits (04857) at 1500 hours where the battalion C.P. was established. "C" 19th and "A" 47th continued to Kessenfels and occupied that town while "A" 19th with attached platoon of tanks from "A" 47th moved to Kenigsfeld (04655) with the mission of clearing the town of any enemy elements, before it was occupied by CC"B" reserve.

A Combat patrol of a light tank, a half-track and two 1/4 Ton trucks preceded "A" 19th to the town, approaching it from the west, and encountered an enemy anti-tank gun which fired on the leading tank at a range of about seventy-five yards, penetrating the hull at the left front killing the driver instantly, and fatally wounding all other members of the crew. With the disabled tank burning and its ammunition exploding, the rest of the Combat patrol dismounted and moved forward on foot while one 1/4 Ton truck was dispatched to "A" 19th to relay the information of the anti-tank gun.

Led by the 1/4 Ton reconnaissance vehicle "A" 19th with its attached tanks raced to the edge of the town and deployed its tanks and infantry and launched a viscious attack with tank-infantry teams at the town. The anti-tank gun was knocked out of action and completely destroyed with one shot from a medium tank which rolled up to the edge of the high ground east of the town and blasted the anti-tank gun while machine gunners of "A" 19th maintained a steady stream of bullets on the gun to prevent its crew from operating it.

Many enemy were discovered dug in on the high ground east of the town and artillery, mortars, and tank gun fire was placed on the area while six machine guns emplaced on the high ground west of the town swept the area with fire.

The nature of the terrain provided excellent opportunities for the attacking forces to advance while receiving a complete blanket of supporting fires, because Konigsfeld is situated in a valley between two high ridges and two platoons of "A" 19th with a platoon of medium tanks moved boldly into the town, and while one platoon cleared the town house-by-house, the other swept through the streets and assaulted the ridge east of the town. Hopelessly trapped many enemy soldiers surrendered quickly while those that fought back were quickly spotted and destroyed, and those few who tried to escape by leaving their dug-in positions and running for the wooded area east of the town, were for the most part, hit by machine- gun fire, and the balance caught by 47th Tank Battalion which came into the rear of the town from the south.

"A" 19th with its attachments then occupied Kotsendorf (0475h) and all Companies outposted their respective areas. (Hq. Co. in Traunits, "C" Co. in Eisenfels, "A" Co. in Kotsendorf) and the customary contact patrols were maintained between the units.

At 151530 April 45 another overlay showing route of advance to the next assembly area was received, and the battalion moved out of Traunits at 1700 hours, moving south-west thru Konigsfeld, thence south-east through Kotsendorf, Dresdendorf, (4053); Sachsendorf (0752) Tiefen Losau (0503) Hochsthal (0485) Haischenfeld (0594) Kirchshorn (0634) and into Leiher (6444) closing there at 2045 hours.

The usual contact patrols to CC"B", 7th Tank Bn., and 499 F.A. Bn. were instituted, Leiher was outposted by all companies (Hq; A 19; C 19; A 47)

The battalion remained in Leiher throughout 16th April, employing 1st Platoon "C" 19th with one section of light tanks from "D" 47th as a screening force east of Leiher. This screening force captured a total of thirty-five (35) enemy during its operations.

A new route and instructions placing the battalion on a 45 minute alert, were received at 1300 hours 16 April and the battalion moved out at 170837 April 45 with its destination designated as Kronn (0683Z). During the march, an order changing the destination to Geladorf (T6387) was received, and with the new overlay were instructions that indicated that CC"A" was to change its route to swing further to the east, squeezing out CC"B" which reverted to Division reserve, and allowing CC"B" to move up on the west of CC"A" and become an attacking unit abreast of CC"A".

The march was uneventful until the Autobahn was reached at (0697313) and a combat patrol of one rifle platoon, a section of medium tanks, and a section of reconnaissance was sent across the Autobahn to provide flank security along a route parallel to the Autobahn. This patrol ran into small, isolated, groups of enemy and routed them, but soon an order to clear the wooded area from the Autobahn all the way east to the railroad that paralleled the road—an area approximately six kilometers wide and eight kilometers long. Both A and C Co's were sent into the area C on the left (north) A on the right (south) of a road running through the center of the area from east to west, and both companies

launched an immediate attack. Both companies ran into considerable enemy resistance, but their determined attack overcame all resistance and the area was cleared by 1900 hours with eighty-five prisoners taken, an estimated fifty killed, and only two casualties suffered by our own troops. In addition to the personnel captured and killed three 77mm anti-tank guns were destroyed, and valuable information regarding the type, morale, and numerical strength of enemy units in that vicinity was obtained.

The march was resumed at 2105 hours and continued through the night, meeting no resistance, until the column reached Hagerhausen (T6693) where the town was hit hard with artillery, tank gun, and small arms fire, the resistance quickly overcome, and the column continued on its march.

When the head of the column approached the edge of woods at (T625881) it was fired upon by an anti-tank gun, but this resistance was rapidly reduced by tank and tank destroyer fire, and the battalion had cleared, and closed into Esselsdorf at 1600 hours 18 April, where the battalion C.P. was established. C 19 and A 47 billeted in Pesnfing (T6289) but all other elements of the battalion billeted in Esselsdorf.

Dorlbach, (T6290) was cleared of all enemy and left vacant on orders from CC"B who indicated that they would use that town for their C.P. However, they actually established their C.P. in Basch, (T6491) and a platoon of engineers (1B 125) was sent from Esselsdorf to outpost and secure the underpass that was the only suitable crossing of the canal that was just a short distance east of the town.

Stringent security measures were taken to outpost each town and all units warned to be on the alert for enemy groups known to be active in the area.

On 19 April a reinforced rifle platoon was sent to CC"B" to provide further security for the town of Basch, then C 19 and A 47 were sent to Grunsberg (T6092) to clear that town of a reported group of sixty "SS" troops, as well as the wooded area east of the town.

The combat force found the town unoccupied, but ran into a lot of resistance in the wooded area which required considerable shelling to reduce, however, the enemy groups were eventually either killed, captured, or driven off and the entire area cleared by 2200 hours, whereupon "C" 19th and "A" 47th stayed in that location for the night.

At 2230 hours, 19 April an enemy patrol of approximately fifty men attack the underpass at Dorlbach killed one and captured nineteen of the twenty-one man Engineer platoon that was guarding the critical site. One man escaped, and returned to the battalion C.P. with full details of the short-lived fight. His story indicated that the enemy patrol was intent on blowing the underpass and also seizing the bridge at (T625902) which was the only other crossing of the canal open to traffic, thereby threatening to completely cut off the battalion from the rest of the Combat Command. Immediately steps were taken to provide further security for that vital bridge, and tanks moved from Pesnfing (T6289) to oppose the enemy patrol.

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The attack on this bridge did not materialize, and at 201000 April "C" 19th with "A" 47 (less one platoon) withdrew from Grunsberg and attack Dorlbach to clear the town of enemy. Caught in their fox holes the enemy outpost (about 25 men) were completely annihilated, none being taken prisoner, and none escaping.

Because of increased activity and aggressiveness on the part of the enemy the security around the town of Haelsdorf was doubled and the extra measures proved their advisability when two counter-attacks of Combat patrol strength hit the town—one at 200030 April—the other at [illegible] April. Both were driven off with no casualties being sustained by the defending forces.

At dawn on 21 April "A" 19th with attached platoon of tanks launched an attack on Oberferrieden (T6187) with the mission of seizing that town and cutting the road at (T613870). Much heavier resistance was encountered than had been expected, and by 1300 hours, after suffering ten casualties (4 killed, 6 wounded) "A" Co. withdrew and the town was shelled by light and medium artillery, to which was added the rocket tank and Assault guns of the battalion. The town fell in crumbling piles of masonry under the heavy impact of the shells, and at 210630 April, 45 "A" 19th went back into the town and took it with practically no resistance, while "C" 19th seized the high ground south of the town. The entire mission was completed by 0930 hours with but two casualties—both wounded being sustained by the attacking elements.

A reconnaissance patrol, sent to Unterferrieden determined the town to be unoccupied, and when the battalion was ordered to clear the Westhaid (T6191) - Burgthann (T6090)- Schaillief (T6089) area of all German patrols that were reported to have infiltered there, and this mission was completed by 1900 hours.

At 211400 April the battalion was alerted to the possibility of relieving 47th Tank Battalion which was alerted to move to CC"R" and at 1600 hours "A" 19th completed the occupation and outposting of the area held by 47th.

The balance of the day was spent in organising the defensive sectors of each unit, and tieing in, with patrols, the widely-dispersed units of the battalion. Completion of this work found Hq & Hq. Co 19th (less M.G. platoon and 1aqd 81mm morter) with 1B 636 T.D. attached in Haelsdorf. C 19th (-) with 1A 47th and Machine gun platoon, Hq. Co. 19th attached in Oberferrieden: A 19th with 2A 47th attached in Oehenbruck (T5590): 1C-19 in Pfeifferhutte (T5888) one rifle squad of 2C - 19 with 1 squad 81mm morter platoon outposting the bridge at (T635903), 3C-19 in Schwarzenbach (T6289) guarding the underpass there; 4C-19 attached to CC"B" in Rasch.

At 221000 April 45 operation instructions number 19 indicating new attack plans under which the battalion attack to the south, with the mission of Ryrbaum (T5883) and Rangersricht (T5981).

"C" 19th with attached tanks launched the drive by moving through Unterferrieden (T5986) thence south towards Ryrbaum. When the column entered the wooded area at (T595855) it encountered a road block that consisted of trees cut so they fell criss-crossed across the road. Immediately dismounting, infantrymen moved around the road block and established a bridgehead to protect the men clearing the block.

At 1700 hours, the rain that had been threatening all day finally broke and it rained throughout the night resulting in a complete drenching of the terrain and restricting the heavy vehicles to roads, denying all vehicles any cross-country maneuvering.

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With the road block finally cleared, "C" 19th and its tanks approached Ryrbaum and took up positions overlooking the city. A combat tank-infantry team consisting of one tank and a squad of riflemen, led by Lt. Lingle of "B" Co. moved boldly into town, reaching the first houses unmolested. Immediately German troops began to close in on the team, and, hopelessly out-numbered, the infantry-tank team, working with cool precision, broke out of the ring of Germans that had formed around them, and withdrew. As the tank swung around on the muddy terrain, it became mired, and eventually was abandoned, the crew returning with the infantrymen.

The rain had made all roads muddy and slippery, with many roads becoming impassable, thereby cutting sharply into the traffic formerly handled. These conditions resulted in "A" 19th with its attach tanks, failing to get into Unterferrieden until 0500 hours 23 April after a very difficult trip from Uebenbrush.

A coordinated attack of Ryrbaum was planned for dawn of 23 April, with "A" 19 leading, "C" and Hq. Co. 19 supporting with fire, and "C" 19 moving in to assist "A" 19 in the final mopping up stages.

At 0700 hours artillery laid a heavy 5 minute concentration on the town which had been shelled intermittently throughout the night, and at 0705, "A" 19 jumped off, leaving the southern edge of the woods north of Ryrbaum and sweeping into town in two columns.

No resistance was encountered and by 0930 hours the town was completely cleared and outposted. At 1030 hours new orders were received and at 1330 hours the battalion left Ryrbaum bound for Jarsdorf (T5569) where, after a strictly administrative march, it closed at 232030 April 45.

At this time the division left the Seventh U.S. Army and was attached to the Third Corps of the Third U.S. Army.

At 240100 orders directing a continuation of the attack to the south-east with the mission of seizing a crossing of the Altmuth river at Beilngries (T7355) were received, and the battalion moved out of Jarsdorf at 0630 hours 24th April 1945.

The route followed took the battalion through Meinsfeld (T5766); Ober Massing (T6063); Herrnsberg (T6559); Litterzhofen (T6858); Hirschberg (T7155); and into Beilngries.

The battalion proceeded without incident until it reached Obermassing (T6063) where it was halted by a blown bridge across a non-fordable stream. Attached engineers, utilizing materials found in the town, with a goodly amount of civilian labor, soon built a bridge of telephone poles and heavy two and three inch planking that got the battalion across the stream by 1400 hours. With the greater majority of the battalion across the stream, the bridge broke and those elements of the battalion that had gotten across before the bridge broke continued the attack, and was finally halted by a road block and mine field at (T678588) which was finally cleared at 1730.

The following image(s) may be of poor quality due to the poor quality of the **original**.

Another mine field was encountered at 2000 hours in vicinity (T7058) but this was easily by-passed and the head of the column reached Beilngries at 1830 hours, arriving almost simultaneously with the 10th Tank battalion which was operating on the left of our column.

Reconnaissance, instituted immediately, indicated that the bridges around the town were all blown, with the exception of two bridges south of town which had not been blown, but which were of no immediate value as a third bridge along that road had been blown thereby denying use of the road to all vehicles.

"A" 19 immediately sent out a detachment to secure the two bridges that were intact, while plans for the building of a pontoon bridge at the site of the blown bridge were made.

Despite the blown bridges it was a simple matter to cross the stream on foot, so "C" 19 was given the mission of crossing at Kottingworth (T6553) and seizing Paulushofen (T7552) and continuing the attack to seize Amtmannsdorf (T7551) "A" 19 was given the mission of crossing at Beilngries and following "C" 19 into Paulushofen.

The companies jumped off at 0900 hours 25 April and were immediately pinned down by small arms and mortar fire. Both companies were pinned securely by snipers and automatic weapons fire, with "A" 19 in particular, suffering sixteen (16) casualties--two battle exhaustion, and fourteen (14) wounded while C 19 had but six--five wounded and one exhaustion.

With their usual determination, C 19 pushed themselves forward against the murderous hail of small arms, crossing approximately six hundred yards of flat, open field before reaching the wooded slopes of the ridge on top of which was their objective.

Both Companies kept heavy barrages of artillery on the enemy-held slopes but "A" 19 could not move forward, so a smoke screen was finally laid in front of them to allow them to reorganise and prepare to seize the high ground after dark.

In the meantime, the bridge site had been receiving heavy mortar fire and it had been impossible for the engineers to do more than operate an assault boat ferry for evacuation of casualties.

After darkness had fallen both A and C 19 moved rapidly into Paulushofen, and onto the high ground south of the river. C 19 encountered heavy opposition in the town initially, so withdrew and directed another series of medium and light artillery on the town, then moved in aggressively, and by 260800 hours the bridge had been completed both Paulushofen and the high ground around it was secured, and Amtmannsdorf was being occupied.

A road block barring use of the road from Beilngries to Paulushofen was removed by engineers and doughboys, the vehicles of A 19 and C 19 were driven into Amtmannsdorf where both companies mounted their vehicles, then the column moved rapidly towards Forching, Germany, (T9030) with the mission of seizing a bridgehead across the Danube river at that point.

The movement of the column was uninterrupted until it reached Forchheim, (T8932) where mortar fire forced the infantry to dismount and attack the town after a short artillery preparation. Although there were considerable troops in the town no resistance of any consequence was met, and C 19 with its attached tanks from A 7 rapidly cleared the town, rounding up numerous prisoners,

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while A 19 with its own attached tanks moved through Forchheim and into Pforring, thence to the bridge site. The leading tank was a scant hundred yards from the bridge when it was blown, and the demolitions squad which blew it were immediately captured.

All elements of the battalion, less A 19 which outposted the bridge site, remained in Pforring that night and exchanged numerous artillery, mortar, and Assault gun rounds with Germans across the Danube who fired intermittently into the town with large-calibre "Nebelwerfers".

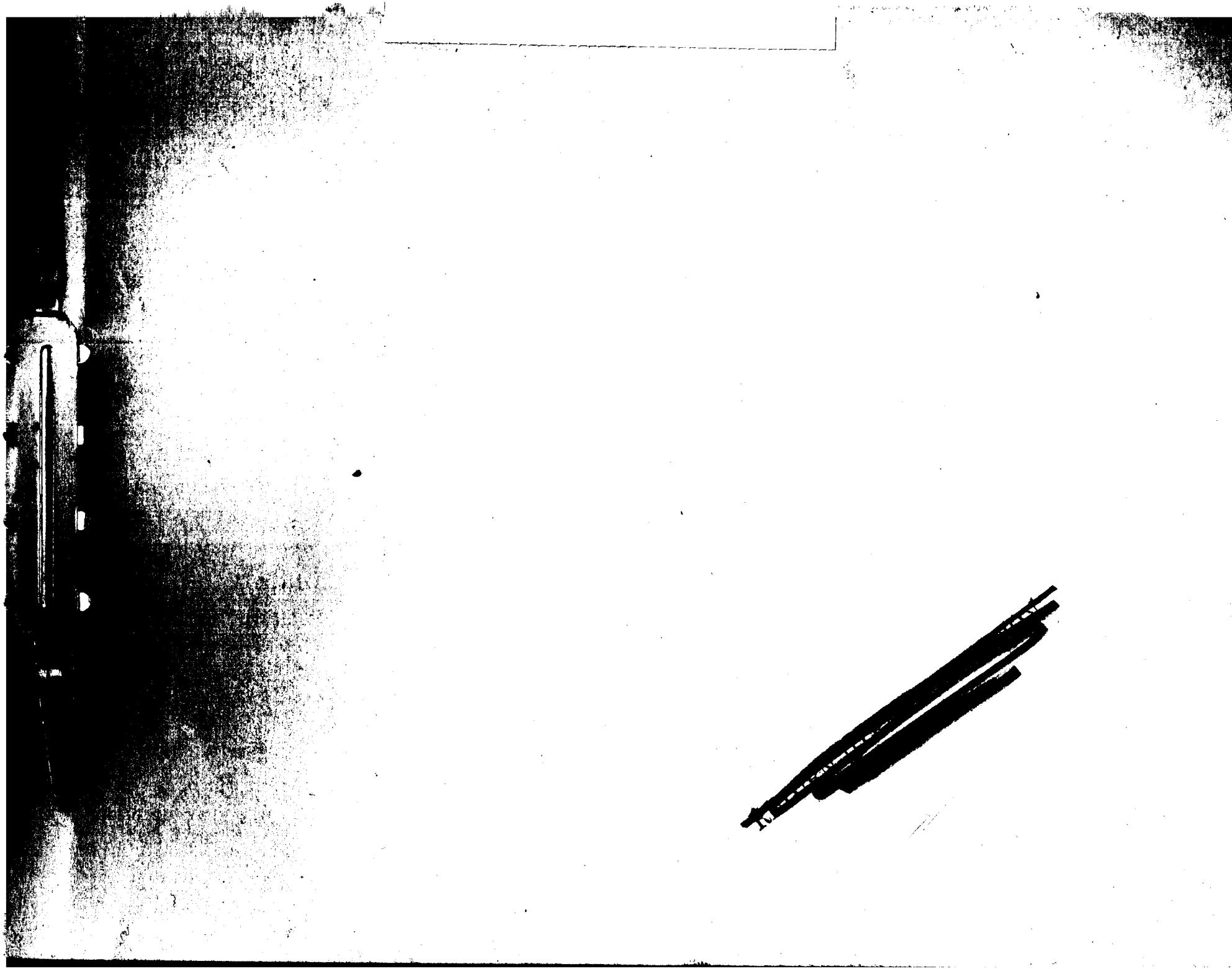
During 27 April numerous exchanges of troops were made. B 19 returned from attachment to 47th Tank Bn., A 47 returned to its parent unit; A 19 was attached to 48th Tank Bn., and C 48 was received as an attachment. A 19 replaced C 19 in CC"B" reserve, while all other attachments remained as they were. Harassing fire was directed at the enemy throughout the day and night, with the battalion assault guns and mortars supplementing the artillery fires.

Having received another order to attack to the Isar River on 27 April, the battalion moved out of Pforring at 1545 hours 28 April 45, moved north-west to Ettling (T8831) then Dolling (T8433) then south-west to Theissing (T8230), Dealing (T7929), Grossklein (T7925), west to Ingolstadt (T7125) where a pontoon bridge was crossed at 1725 hours. Proceeding south, then east after crossing the river, the column moved without interruption to Ernsgaden (T8221) where it billeted for the night.

Another overlay indicating a route of march to the Isar river was received on the morning of 29 April--a billeting party was sent to CC"B" and at 1045 hours the battalion moved out of Ernsgaden and closed in vicinity of Martinszell (Y0807) at 1500 hours.

The billeting party had captured sixty-eight prisoners found within the area the battalion occupied, most of them being very young--between twelve and fourteen years of age.

Hq. and Hq. Co. 19 occupied Martinszell, B 19 occupied Ziegebrunth, and C 19 occupied Katharinzell, each unit outposting its own area until 301630 April when the battalion again moved out, closing into a forward assembly area in vicinity Kirchamper, Germany (Z0693) closing in at 1900 hours, receiving another order at 2130 hours and moving out at 2200 hours, to cross the river at Mooseburg at 2400 hours.

The month of April had been an extremely busy one for the battalion. The entire trend of the war could be traced in the activities of the unit--the fierce, savage, fire fight, so characteristic of the first half of the month had dwindled to mere gestures by the end of the month--the stubborn defense of every town, every river, and every ridge, had become a spiritless, meagre effort by the close of the month, and white flags of surrender had become a commonplace thing signifying that the enemy was at last beaten in spirit as well as physical might.

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